



1 February 2005



## **Presidents Day Holiday Weekend Safety**

1. On 21 February we will pay tribute to the dedicated Americans who have served as President of our great Nation and Commander in Chief of our Armed Forces. The Presidents we honor on Presidents Day have served in turbulent times and all faced many challenges.

2. For our deployed warriors, I want to thank each of you for your dedication and courage in our Global War on Terrorism. For those of you who are not deployed, to give you a headstart this holiday weekend I have designated 18 February as a USAREUR training holiday. This will be the last long weekend of winter, and I hope you take advantage of it by spending time with your family and friends.

3. If you plan to travel, remember that roads will likely be crowded. Heavy traffic is more than just a nuisance; it increases our exposure to the dangers of other travelers who may be stressed or tired. You can help avoid getting stuck in traffic or breaking down on autobahns by carefully planning your trip. This includes checking your vehicle to ensure everything is in order before you set out. This also includes making sure you know the rules of the road and stick to them.

4. When reviewing the rules of the road, pay special attention to those concerning what to do if you are involved in a crash or your vehicle breaks down. A member of our Army team was recently struck by a vehicle on the autobahn after getting out of his own vehicle. He had been involved in a minor accident and had pulled over to inspect his car. Although we cannot control the behavior of other drivers, we can reduce the chances of getting hurt or killed in situations like these by doing the following:

- Turn on the vehicle's emergency flashers and move the vehicle away from the traffic lane.
- Take out the warning triangle, open it fully, and place it about 100 meters behind the vehicle (200 meters if on the autobahn) where it can be easily seen by drivers of oncoming vehicles.
- Stay off the road, and do not walk or run across the autobahn.
- Call for help using a cell phone or the nearest emergency telephone (as indicated by the arrows on roadside reflector posts).
- Stay out of the vehicle. Stand behind the guardrail (if there is one), remain alert, and wait for help to arrive.

**ANY MISSION, ANYWHERE!**

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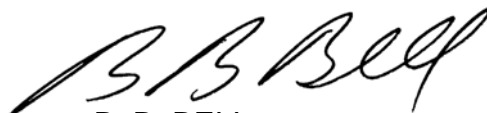
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5. Soldiers: By now you know that I expect you to have an open and honest conversation with your first-line NCO about your plans before a holiday weekend. I expect a verbal contract between you and your leaders. Failing to do this is selfish. Not telling your first-line NCO your plans not only puts yourself in jeopardy, it jeopardizes the lives of your family members and friends. Do not let yourself become a weekend statistic. You are a vital member of the USAREUR team, and your fellow Soldiers depend on you.

6. Leaders: If a Soldier's plan must be revised because of safety concerns, I expect you to look that Soldier in the eye and say so. Saying "no" or providing guidance for alternative travels schedules to a Soldier whose plan for the weekend is too risky is a positive act of concern for the well-being of that Soldier. It also teaches the Soldier to identify, assess, and mitigate risks.

7. I am convinced that your personal involvement and concern for your Soldiers will make a difference over the Presidents Day weekend, and ultimately save lives. Make it happen! Doing so will help ensure that we continue to execute with excellence Any Mission, Anywhere.



B. B. BELL  
General, USA  
Commanding

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